CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1661
17 January 2002

Original: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 14 JANUARY 2002 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT COMMEMORATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE OPEN SKIES TREATY AS GIVEN ON JANUARY 9 IN WASHINGTON BY MR. RICHARD BOUCHER, SPOKESMAN OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Attached is the text of a statement commemorating the entry into force of the Open Skies Treaty, as given on January 9 in Washington by Mr. Richard Boucher, Spokesman of the U.S. Department of State.

I would be grateful if you would issue this text as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distribute it to all Member States and non-member participant States of the Conference.

(Signed): Eric M. Javits
Permanent Representative
of the United States to the
Conference on Disarmament

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U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.
Office of the Spokesman
January 9, 2002

STATEMENT BY MR. RICHARD BOUCHER, SPOKESMAN

Treaty on Open Skies Enters into Force

The Treaty on Open Skies, which will promote transparency and cooperation among its 26 parties, entered into force on January 1, 2002.

The original concept for the Treaty — mutual and cooperative aerial observation — was proposed by President Eisenhower in 1955, and the Treaty itself was an initiative of former President Bush in 1989. The Treaty was negotiated between the members of NATO and of the former Warsaw Pact, with the latter dissolving during the course of the talks. The Treaty was signed in Helsinki, Finland, on March 24, 1992, and elements have been applied provisionally since then. Most signatories ratified the Treaty soon after signature (the United States ratified in 1993), but two states whose ratification was required for entry into force — Belarus and Russia — did not do so until early last year, leading to its entry into force now.

Although the European security environment has changed significantly since the Treaty on Open Skies was negotiated and signed, the Treaty is still expected to be a useful element of the European security framework, which includes the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Vienna Document 1999 agreement on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). The Treaty on Open Skies provides a means of further increasing transparency, mutual understanding, and cooperation, among its parties.

The following states have signed and ratified the Open Skies Treaty: Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States. (Kyrgyzstan has signed but not ratified.)